

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

How sorry I was to hear of Winnifred D's illness! I think she is a real brave little woman and deserves very rapid recovery. I am sure all the nieces and nephews when they read her letter will join with me in hoping that she soon will be able to run around again. I sympathize with Mary D. in her disappointment about the postponement of her first communion. Winnifred E. seems to take pride in decorating her May altar. Agnes McC. takes a happy interest in nature, the pretty flowers, birds and trees sharing her love. Annie O'N. is a busy little girl, and takes kindly to outdoor work. Clare speaks of trying to catch a squirrel. I wonder what he would have done with it. Remember, little ones, that the dumb animals must never be treated cruelly. It is mean and cowardly to be unkind to the tiny animals, who are God's creatures. Another thing, Clare should never send a letter with a blot. It is not much trouble to rewrite it and have the satisfaction of knowing that it is perfectly presentable. I think John C. might start out canvassing for the "True Witness." He says that his class has to wait until the teacher brings the paper to school and reads it aloud to them. That means, of course, that there are very few subscribers in that section. Now I hope John will see his way to obtain subscribers for us and we will give him a good commission. In fact, any one who does work in this line for us will be well remunerated. I hope Ethel D. is quite well again and will be a regular correspondent. Why, of course, Harry T. can come right in to the corner. The more the merrier, you know. Joseph has quite a large family of goslings and chickens. Many thanks, dear, for exceedingly kind invitation. Perhaps some day your venerable aunt will start out on a so-called pastoral tour and visit all her dear little nieces and nephews. Would that not be a contract? Joseph has me every time when he mentions his horse Kit and speaks of giving me a drive.

Good-bye, dear little ones. Your loving, AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

It has been a beautiful week so far. The men are working in the fields and the flowers are all in blossom. The boys go in their bare feet to school now. Last night when I came home from school my brother and I went picking May flowers. We got two lovely big bunches of lilies. We go gather them every Friday at school, and when we come back we give them to the teacher and she puts them in water. I think it is much pleasanter to live in the country than in town in the summer time. When the days get so warm we do not feel like working, and we can go to the woods. There are many beautiful things to see, the flowers, the trees, the birds and the squirrels. While the sun is pouring down its melting rays and there is scarcely a breath of air, the woods are cool and sweet, with the green grass on which to rest. The flowers give a sweet perfume, and the birds are singing very happily. It takes all tired feeling away. Now and then a rabbit will run across by your side and the squirrels play hide and seek in the trees. Oh, how pleasant it is to go to the woods and forget your troubles just for one short day! Well, dear Auntie, I guess I will close with lots of love to all cousins and also yourself. Your loving niece, AGNES McC. Lonsdale, May 18.

Dear Aunt Becky:

As it is Friday, I am going to write again. I had to stay home from school for two days last week to plant potatoes. I did not go to Catechism last Sunday, for it was raining. I have to go a mile to catechism, but my sister and

Aggie McCulloch go with me. We had an awful thunder and lightning storm here last Saturday night. A church near Deseronto was burned. We watched the fire until it was nearly out. We are having very warm weather here those last three days. Our teacher gives a nice book for a present to whoever goes the most days to school. But I did not try, for my mother was sick in the winter and my sister and I had to stay home from school for a while. I guess as my letter is getting rather long I will say good-bye. Your loving niece, ANNIE O'N. Lonsdale, May 18.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Even a little boy like me can find work to do on a farm. I drive the cows to and from the pasture for my father. My cousins and I were coming from putting the cows over in the field and we saw a squirrel up a tree and we tried to get him, but he got away in a stone pile. We thought we would be late for school so we had to leave him. I guess that is all for this time. Your loving nephew, CLARE B. Lonsdale, May 16.

Dear Aunt Becky:

As it is two weeks since I wrote to you I thought I would write again. You must be surprised to get all the letters from this section in a bunch. I will tell you our plan. Whoever intends writing to Aunt Becky writes his or her letter during the week. Friday we bring our letter in an envelope and one cent to school. Then the teacher takes charge of them, putting as many letters as possible in one envelope. By this means we save our coppers and envelopes, and can afford to write very often. As none of us take the paper, the teacher brings it to school and reads all the letters and gives each his letter. But as she does not get the paper till Saturday we have to wait patiently till Monday. So you see, dear Aunt Becky, we have to write before we see our last letters. Saturday evening, May 12, we had a terrible electric storm and I was out in the most of it driving the cows from pasture. I was all wet and when I got home I had to change my clothes. Well, this is getting to be a very long letter, so I had better "ring off." Do you allow slang, Aunt Becky? Your loving nephew, JOHN C. Albert, May 17.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I have been very sick since I wrote to you, but I am going to try and write to you every week. The blessing of the bell at St. Agnes Church takes place on Sunday at 3 o'clock. Bishop Racicot is going to bless it. Hoping you are well, I remain, Your little niece, ETHEL T. Montreal.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Will you receive me as one of your little nephews. I would be so pleased to become one. I go to school every day, and at night we have to write an account of every thing that happens during the day. The next morning when we go in the Brother reads it out to the whole class. I think this is all for this time. I remain, Your nephew, HARRY T. Montreal.

Dear Aunt Becky:

What a pleasure it is for us little boys to have such a nice Aunt to write to and receive answers every week. The weather is beautiful for the last two days, just what farmers want. I have ten little goslings and twenty-two chickens and many more eggs to hatch. We are not going to raise any turkeys this year. I also have three calves. I would be pleased to have you come out this summer and spend a week with us then I could show you all my pets and give you a ride after my favorite horse, Kit. Good-bye. JOSEPH. Granby, May 19.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Sunday is a lovely day. My sister and I picked a lot of flowers for our May altar to-day. We have a cousin going to school in St. Boniface, Winnipeg. He made his first Communion the 6th of May. Our Aunt sent us some flower seed from the West, and we planted it and they grew up beautiful flowers. I suppose the reason M. Edna M. did not write was that she had so much work to do for her little brothers and sisters. How glad she must be that she is not in Calgary now. That would be lonesome for them all. Good-bye. From your loving niece, WINNIFRED A. E. Warden, Que., May 20.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I was so glad to see many letters in the Corner last week. We have a new cousin in Magog, but we do not know her name. She was born on the very day that grandpa died last year, May 8th. We do not go to school now, but we study our catechism and music. We do not study very much. The Bishop was to confirm our little cousins on the 11th, but he was taken sick. I hope when I am to be confirmed the Bishop will not be sick, but will be right on hand, as it must be a great disappointment. Our first Communion was put off, and we felt very sorry. From your affectionate, MARY E. D. Warden, Que., May 20.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I asked mamma to write you for me when she read my letter and all the little cousins' letters in the Corner this morning. I am sure Aunt Becky will wonder why I could not read them myself. Well, dear Auntie and cousins, you will be surprised to know that I am in the hospital and just over an operation for appendicitis. Although the True Witness was here last Thursday, I was only able to have the letters read to me to-day. If you remember in my last letter I said I had been ill for six long weeks in February and March, and that was my third attack of appendicitis, and last week I had another, and the doctor ordered me to come to the hospital, where I was operated on Tuesday at 2 p.m., the 15th May. I was very ill afterwards from the chloroform, and sore side. I am still lying on my back, but not suffering apart from thirst. Oh, Auntie, I was thirsty! I told the nurse that when I'd go home I would sit by the sink and drink all day, and on my way home I am to get out and drink at every little brook. Well, Auntie, I wonder if there are any of the little cousins like me. I have my appendix in a bottle on the shelf. There is a sweet little bird in my room, and he sings all the day long so sweetly. Miss Wilson named the bird "Winnie" after me. I attended Harold's first Communion and confirmation before entering the hospital, and I will never forget the grand ceremony. There were 29 little boys, all dressed alike; they sang and prayed all during Mass, and the music was grand. All the parents communicated and received a special indulgence. The altar was beautifully decorated and lighted up by electric lights; Rev. Mother St. Bonaventure, who is Superior of St. John Berchman's School, of the Good Shepherd Convent, is our aunt, and Harold loves to be with her. She sends Harold to the hospital to see me; I have my mamma with me all the time, and I see many friends who bring me toys and flowers, but I am not yet well enough to play with the toys. I hope Edna and Winnifred will write again. My love to you and all the cousins. I am very lonesome for my papa and my little sisters. Your little sick niece, WINIFRED D. Grondin's Hospital, Quebec.

Dear Aunt Becky:

"To-morrow I'll do it," said Bennie; "I will, by and by," said Seth; "Not now—pretty soon," says Jennie; "In a minute," says little Beth. O, dear little people, remember that, true as the stars in the sky. The little streets of To-morrow, Pretty Soon, and By and By. Lead one and all. As straight, they say, As the king's highway, To the city of Not at All. —Youth's Companion.

MARY AND JANE.

"Evelyn Mabel," said little Mary Ford, thoughtfully. "Evelyn Mabel," repeated her little sister Jane, who was sitting close beside her on the front doorstep.

"Edith Lillian," said Mary, this time with a little questioning note in her voice; again Jane repeated her sister's words.

"Why don't you say a name?" asked Mary anxiously. "You haven't said a single name yet. And every name I say you just repeat it after me. You'll have to make up your own name, Jane."

"But you think of all the prettiest names. Mary. Won't it be lovely to have nice names? Mother said whatever names we selected could be our own names. I think I shall be Daisy May."

"Daisy May!" repeated Mary scornfully. "That's worse than Jane. I have about decided that my name shall be Victoria Ardell."

"My!" exclaimed Jane admiringly. "That is lovely! Now you think of one for me, Mary."

Mary brushed back her dark curls and turned her black eyes toward the flowering vines on the lattice work porch.

"Jessamine Florence," she said, suddenly. "There, Jane, isn't that lovely?"

"Yes, indeed!" answered Jane happily. "Now let's go and tell mother. I guess she'll be real pleased."

The two girls ran down into the garden, where their mother was picking currants.

"Well, Imogene Clare," said Mrs. Sprague, as Mary ran toward her, "have you and Agnes Louise come to help me pick the currants?"

The two little girls stopped and looked at their mother in astonishment.

"What is it?" questioned Mrs. Sprague.

"Why, you called us Imogene Clare and Agnes Louise," said Jane, reproachfully.

"But you told me this morning that you had decided those were the prettiest names and that you had chosen them for your own," said Mrs. Sprague.

"Oh, mother, but that was this morning, and now we've thought of much nicer names!" explained Mary, eagerly. "Mine is Victoria Ardell and Jane's is Jessamine Florence."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Sprague. "Well, it's rather hard to remember, you see, because yesterday Victoria Ardell's name was Celeste Madeline, and Jessamine Florence's name was Elinore Ermine. I thought your names had been settled."

"Don't you think that Victoria Ardell is nicer than any name?" questioned Mary.

"Why, if I say that what will Jessamine Florence think?" said Mrs. Sprague.

The two little girls walked soberly back to the front doorstep.

"I don't want mother to call me Jessamine Florence," said Jane, with a little quiver in her voice.

"It's a lovely name," insisted Mary.

"I don't care. When she says Jessamine Florence or Elinore Ermine, or any of those made-up names I feel just as if I did when we went over to grandmother's to stay all night."

Jane nodded her head.

The two little girls ran down the path again.

"Oh, mother!" said Jane, with a little skip. "We've got the nicest names now."

"You can remember these just as easy," said Mary, "and they are to be our truly names always."

"Yes, always," said Jane.

"Why, then I must remember them!" said Mrs. Sprague. "Now, what are they?"

"Mary and Jane," said the little girls together.

IN A MINUTE.

"Yes, in just a minute, mother!" Ten, fifteen minutes pass, and no signs of moving.

"Bessy, dear!" begged mother, nervously, "it is almost tea time, and you know papa can't wait tonight. He said he would have to catch that night train for New York."

Bessy jumped up at this with great promise of alacrity. But her eyes were still glued to the paper she had been reading, and which she held open before her at arm's length as she walked. The result of this whole-souled devotion to literature was a sharp bump and recoil as she came in contact with the edge of the kitchen door, which stood partly open. The shock sent her whirling to one side, where she managed to trip over Baby Nell's dolly-cart and came down in a general collapse, among her fragile treasures.

"Go 'way, bad girl!" screamed Nell, kicking and pounding her feet and fists. "You've broken the noses all off my walnut babies, and—there! there! see what you've done!"

"Oh, baby mine!" cried Bessy, repentantly, "sister didn't mean to!" And there are several valuable minutes consumed in pacifying the injured householder and ascertaining damages.

"Bessy, dear!" said mamma in despair, "there comes papa now! Set the teakettle in and spread the cloth before he gets here, so there'll be a look of supper about it."

"Bessy" is a photograph of a girl in a family where I have been visiting. There are so many girls just like her that I am not in the least afraid of Miss Bessy's discovering any particular likeness. In fact, she was "written up" long, long ago, in an old, old book. We have the real, old-fashioned kind of boys and girls still—the kind that used to say, respectfully, "I go, sir!" and went not.

Now, how much better is that than saying "I won't!" out and out, so that at least people may know what to expect of you. Then mother can set the table herself if it must be done promptly, and attend to your manners afterwards. Then the fire won't turn pale with hope deferred and go out in gray ashes while your highness prepares to get ready to begin to get that long-promised hod of coal for it; nor father go himself to drive the cows home; nor the hired man say wicked words when he comes up from the broken pasture fence to find you as well as the hammer; nor "the twins" wait despairingly through an hour-long minute while the day travels westward and playtime is over and the poor little dolly-cart goes to rack and ruin.

"Don't say, 'In a minute!' It is a foolish word, a shiftless. Say, 'This minute!' and live up to it. The world is aching for this kind of 'minutemen.' Enlist at once! There's room in the ranks, and promotion for all but deserters."

MADE TWO HEARTS HAPPY.

How little it costs to make hearts happy! A writer tells a pleasing incident which took place recently in a city street-car, and which carries its own lesson.

The car remained at a standstill for so long a time that every one wondered if something were wrong. It was soon seen, however, that a sturdy little urchin was very tenderly helping a lame child aboard, and, as the car moved on, his cheery "good-bye" called a smile to the cripple's wan face.

The latter seated himself so that he could look out of the window, and every few minutes he waved his hand at some one on the street. The other people in the car became curious, and, looking out, saw a little fellow running along the sidewalk, keeping pace with them.

"Who is that?" asked a lady of the lame boy.

"Why, that is Jim!" was the proud response.

"Yes, dear; but who is 'Jim'?"

"Why, Jim's my brother, of course!"

By this time everyone was listening and smiling in sympathy.

"Oh, I see," said the lady; "that's the boy who helped you on the car. But why does he not ride with you?"

"Why," he said, "we only had a nickel, and Jim said I must ride. You see," he added after a pause, "I can't walk very well, but Jim, he can run fine!"

"See! what is this?" the lady said.

With eyes big with delight, the child caught up a 5-cent piece that had miraculously appeared in the torn little cap which lay on the seat between the lady and himself. Then, with frantic gestures, he hailed "Jim," who boarded the car at the next corner.

It would be hard to say who was the happiest on that car during the remainder of the trip, but, surely, the boys thought that they were.

FLORA McFLIMSEY'S TRUNK. This is a very amusing game and serves to exercise the memory as well. It serves for a veranda game, a rainy-day game, or an evening game. The leader begins by saying that Miss Flora McFlimsey, having decided to spend the summer at Newport, and having nothing to wear, was obliged to pack her trunk with the following articles, saying, for instance, that:

The first thing she put in was a bundle of letters.

The player who sits next to the leader then repeats what article the leader gave and adds another, as:

The first thing she put in was a bundle of letters, and the next her grandfather's clock.

The next player takes up the tale and repeats from the beginning, adding another article, as:

The first thing she put in was a bundle of letters, the next her grandfather's clock, the next a volume of Shakespeare.

Thus it goes around the circle, each one repeating the articles already mentioned and adding another.

If anyone fails to repeat the list correctly he drops out of the game. When each has added an article the one who can repeat the list from beginning to end in order is the winner.

This is a game at which old and young can play together and is one which always amuses.

SOME FAMOUS BOYS.

A boy used to crush the flowers to get their color and painted the white side of his father's cottage in Tyrol with all sorts of pictures, which the mountaineer gazed at as wonderful. He was the great artist Titian.

An old painter watched a little fellow who amused himself making drawings of his pots and brushes, easel and stool, and said: "That boy will beat me some day." So he did, for he was Michael Angelo.

A German boy was reading a blood and thunder novel. Right in the midst of it he said to himself: "Now this will never do. I get too much excited over it. I can't study so well after it. So here goes!" And he flung the book out into the river. He was Fichte, the great German philosopher.

GROWTH.

"Throughout the earth the gospel preached by nature to man is that of growth. This is the glorious marvel that is ever with us. Seed grain climbing to waving harvest, acorn springing up to towering oak; black coal crystallizing to diamond, and flint gathering the heat of the earth till as opal it meets the dawn with tints pure as its own; while on every lowliest grass blade is written the story of the Ascension."—Ruskin.

THE CHARITY OF MARY.

Beyond all charity is the charity which the Mother of God most mercifully showed to us when she willingly gave up her Son to die for us. As God's love to man is shown supremely in that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us, so the charity of Mary is displayed most conspicuously in her willing offering of her only Son, which she made first in the temple and afterward on Calvary. She was content to behold His bitter sufferings, she acquiesced in them all, because at no other price than those sufferings could our souls be saved. And in reward for this all surpassing charity on the part of the Mother of God she has become an unfailing channel of grace to men. Let us love Mary, who loved us so much as to give for our sake what she loved infinitely better than herself.

THE BLIND MOUSE.

One day while sitting under a shady maple tree by the roadside reading a book, the soft rustling sound made by the wind blowing through a field of tasseled wheat caused me to look up. To my great surprise, I saw two large field mice slowly crossing the road to the wheat field.

One mouse had his eyes tightly closed and seemed totally blind, while the other mouse was cautiously leading him along by a small stick which they both held in their mouths.—Selected.